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AUTHOR Daloz, Laurent A.

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ABSTRACT

This book offers perspectives for understanding adult learners and suggests in practical ways based on current development theory how higher education professionals can work more effectively to improve the quality of the educational experience for these students. Using the metaphor of a journey, the book explores the process of adult learning in higher education in nine chapters. Chapter 1 begins the process with information about adult development, and chapter 2 introduces the idea of the mythic journey as a way of making sense of life's changes. Chapter 2 also includes a discussion of some principles of teaching embodied in the story and ends with a real-life journey tale. Three detailed vignettes, each highlighting a major current theory of adult development, form the basis of chapter 3, which explains each of the theories. Chapter 4 follows several teachers and their adult students on their journeys, and chapter 5, the central chapter, discusses the meaning of the transformations that can take place in adult education in light of development theory. Chapter 6 draws the reader into the struggles of the teacher and students as they grapple with new forms of "truth" and "reality." Chapter 7 examines what helps or hinders personal growth, and chapter 8 shows how mentors in education provide support, challenge, and vision for their protegees. Chapter 9 offers a final cautionary tale and discusses some of the limitations and dangers of mentoring. It concludes with a summary of the author's educational convictions: that education is care, and mentors do matter. The book contains 170 references. (KC)

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